

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Megan Brennan
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington DC, 20590

May 9, 2019

Dear Postmaster General Brennan,

Recent media reports indicate that the Republican National Committee (RNC) is sending out a mailer soliciting donations and political information under the guise of an official document from the US Census Bureau. We write to request that you consider investigating the RNC mail piece and any other pieces of mail that appear to come from the US Census Bureau. We believe that this mailing represents an illegal attempt to mislead the American people and capitalize on the good work and reputation of the US Census Bureau for political purposes, a clear violation of the Deceptive Mail Prevention and Enforcement Act.

The mailing in question is designed to resemble official census documents and to deceive recipients using phrases such as "DO NOT DESTROY" and "OFFICIAL DOCUMENT" on the exterior of the envelope. Further, it is labeled as the "2019 Congressional District Census" and lists a date for recipients to respond by. These characteristics are unique to real census documents and are, at best, a deceitful attempt to coerce responses for political purposes.

Under the Deceptive Mail Prevention and Enforcement Act, 39 USC 3001, it is illegal for an organization to misrepresent a solicitation for donations as an official government mailing.

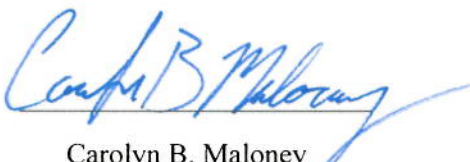
In 2010, during the last decennial census, the RNC produced a similar mailing that used the likeness of the census for partisan political gain. At that time, there was bipartisan concern and Congress moved legislation within days to the president's desk, not once, but twice to make this practice illegal.

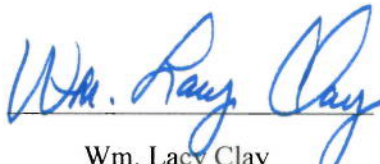
The 2020 decennial census is less than a year away. By the time the census begins, American taxpayers will have invested over \$15 billion dollars to ensure a successful, accurate count of all American residents. Much of that money has been used to build public trust between the Census Bureau and the American people, a critical element of achieving a high self-response rate.

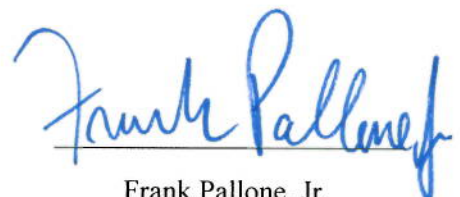
The stakes for the 2020 census could not be higher. Census data is used to direct over \$800 billion in annual federal funding, apportion seats in the House of Representatives and the electoral college and help large and small businesses grow efficiently and effectively. Most importantly, there are no do-overs, and the data collected in 2020 will be the informational road map for our country for the next decade.

We believe that the RNC mailing is a cynical attempt to use the good name of the census for partisan political purposes, misleads recipients, and is a clear violation of federal law intended to preserve the integrity of official government business. Additionally, we believe no political organization, regardless of party affiliation, should exploit or endanger the established reputation of the census for political purposes. We hope that the United States Postal Inspection Service will consider an investigation into this matter.

Sincerely,


Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress


Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress


Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress